

have been designed to enable the employees to visit their home town for meeting family obligations while in service. Travel facilities for visiting other places are also provided to serving personnel on a reduced scale to give them an opportunity to visit and see other regions of the country so that it may help them in widening their knowledge and in discharging their duties as public servants. These considerations are not attracted in the case of pensioners and they cannot be considered at par with serving employees for extension of travel concession facilities.

Decline in Industrial Growth in Steel Plant

2929. SHRI RAMSAGAR : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "SAIL sits over million tonne inventory" appearing in the "Hindustan Times" October 28, 1996;

(b) if so, whether slowdown in the industrial growth has affected the steel plants in the country; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to accelerate the industrial growth in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Demand for steel depends on interplay of a number of factors such as availability of funds with consumers, cost of credit, competition from domestic sources as well as imports, overall industrial growth etc. The aggregate impact of such factors varies from unit to unit.

As per the latest Index of Industrial Production released by the C.S.O., the overall sectoral growth of Industrial Production in April-July, 1996-97 was 9.3% as compared to 12.3% in the corresponding period of last year. The deceleration in the industrial growth is confined to a few sectors particularly the Crude Petroleum, Fertilizer and Power Generation. Sector specific Strategies have been initiated to remove constraints in underperforming sectors. Adequate credit with softened interest rates assured to industries through the recently announced busy season credit policy are providing further impetus to growth.

[Translation]

South African Investments in Steel Production

2930. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have requested the Government of South Africa to make investments in steel production;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the terms and conditions of investment alongwith the details thereof; and

(d) the reaction of the South African Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) The Ministry of Steel have not made any request to the Government of South Africa to make any investment in steel production.

(b) to (d). Do not arise in view of (a) above.

[English]

Promotion from Asstt. Manager to Dy. Manager

2931. PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that 6 years period for promotion from Asstt. Manager to Dy. Manager viz. 10/12 grade to 13/14 grade in the Indian Airlines in the case of general category and 5 years for the reserve category has been reduced to 4 years for both the categories;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the reserved category employees have been pressing for one year's relaxation as given to them previously and a few meetings with the administration were held by the representatives of the reserved category to resolve the issue; and

(c) if so, the decision taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Since the qualifying period has been reduced from 6 years to 4 years, uniformly in respect of all the categories of Officers, it was not considered necessary to extend any further relaxation.

Magnesite in Panthal-Udhampur

2932. SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether huge stocks Magnesite mineral have been discovered in Panthal-Udhampur area of Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken for exploitation of this mineral;

(d) whether the task was entrusted to a company of Hyderabad;

(e) if so, the terms and conditions thereof;

- (f) whether the work has been abandoned;
 (g) if so, the reasons therefor;
 (h) whether there is any fresh move to exploit this mineral wealth; and
 (i) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (i). Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Demand for Railway Station

2933. SHRI RUP CHAND PAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware about the long standing demand for a Railway Station at Khusigachi, place between Baidyaabati and Bhadreswar in the Howrah Division of the Eastern Railway; and

(b) if so, the steps taken/proposed to expedite the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). The proposal for opening of passenger halt at Khurigachi between Baidyabati and Bhadreswar stations has been examined but not found justified on operational, engineering and financial grounds. Besides, the proposal has also not been found justified on passenger amenity grounds due to availability of other modes of transport for people to commute in that area.

Demand Of More Funds For Development of Tourism

2934. SHRI MURALIDHAR JENA : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Orissa has demanded more funds from the Union Government for the development of some particular tourist spots;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last two years; and

(c) the amount released, scheme-wise?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) Each year the Department of Tourism in consultation with the State Government officials prioritises projects for Central Financial Assistance. These projects are identified on the basis of their merits inter-se-priority and availability of funds. The Department of Tourism has prioritised 8 projects at an estimated cost of Rs. 250 lakhs for Central Financial Assistance during 1996-97 to Orissa.

(b) and (c). The detail of projects sanctioned and the amount released to Orissa during the last two years is enclosed in the statement

STATEMENT

Projects/Schemes Sanctioned During 1994-95

Sl. No.	Name of the project/scheme	Amount sanctioned (Rs. in lakhs)	Amount released
Orissa			
1.	Tourist complex at Hirakund	40.39	14.62
2.	Tourist lodge at Rayagada	25.20	1.00
3.	Tourist complex at Narsingnath	41.23	1.00
4.	Tourist complex at Korapat	42.43	7.00
5.	Illumination of Sea Beach at Puri	5.46	3.00
6.	Beach Festival 1994	10.00	8.00
7.	Rajaseri Festival 1995	1.60	1.00
Total		166.31	35.62

Projects/ Schemes Sanctioned For The Year 1995-96

Orissa			
1.	Amentities Centre at Dhauli	20.26	10.00
2.	Tourist lodge at Badarama	36.41	18.00
3.	Floating restaurant at Barkal	42.89	21.00
4.	Beach cleaners equipment Puri, Orissa.	9.30	5.00
Total		108.86	54.00

Gauge Conversion

2935. SHRI K. KANDASAMY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have approved conversion of Salem to Kashmir via Ranchipuram and Namakkal Meter Gauge line into Broad Gauge; and

(b) if so, the time by which the work is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) There is no such project of conversion of Salem to Kashmir line. However, a Broad Gauge route is already available connecting Salem and Jammu.

Abandoned Vehicles in MTNL, Delhi

2936. SHRI G.M. KUNTURKAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether several vehicles in MTNL, Delhi have been abandoned by the Nigam and its drivers are sitting idle